

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 6-15 and 17-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14 and 18 are amended, and claims 2, 4, 5, 16, 17 and 19 are cancelled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Support for amended claim 1 can be found, for example, in original claims 2 and 5. Support for amended claim 11 can be found, for example, in Figure 6c. Support for amended claim 18 can be found, for example in original claim 20. Accordingly, no new matter is added. In view of at least the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Claim Objections

The Office Action indicates that should claim 11 be found allowable, claim 18 will be objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants submit that claims 11 and 18 are not substantial duplicates of each other. Specifically, claim 11 is directed to "a downstream sheet conveying mechanism." In contrast, claim 18 is directed to "a processing device." Thus, claims 11 and 18 are not directed to the same features as alleged by the Office Action. Accordingly, an objection to claim 18 after allowance of claim 11 would be improper.

II. Rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kawano et al. (JP 2000-318904) in view of Sako et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,073,927). The cancellation of claims 2, 4, 5, 16, 17 and 19 renders the rejection of these claims moot, and the rejection of claims 1, 3, 6-15 and 17-19 is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claim 1, the combination of Kawano and Sako does not disclose or suggest a driven roller unit that includes "a plurality of driven roller

segments that are arranged symmetrically on both sides of a center of the width of the sheet to be fed, and axes of the segments of the driven roller [being] arranged and inclined symmetrically on both sides of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed," and "axes of the segments of the driven roller arranged on one side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed [being] aligned on each side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed" (emphasis added).

The Office Action alleges that the follower roller means 16 of Kawano corresponds to the claimed driven roller unit as recited above. However, Applicants respectfully disagree.

Specifically, as acknowledged by the Office Action on page 2, the follower roller means 16 of Kawano merely includes revolving shafts 16a that are arranged with their axes disposed at a slant on both sides of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed. See Kawano, for example, Fig. 13b. Importantly, the follower roller means 16 of Kawano does not include "axes of the segments of the driven roller [being] arranged and inclined symmetrically on both sides of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed," and "axes of the segments of the driven roller arranged on one side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed [being] aligned on each side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed."

Sako fails to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Kawano. Sako is only relied upon for allegedly disclosing a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of a driven roller being smaller than a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of a drive roller.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 1.

Regarding the rejection of independent claim 11, the combination of Kawano and Sako does not disclose or suggest a "second drive shaft [that] has four segments, the two innermost segments inclined relative to the first drive shaft and the two outermost segments parallel to the first drive shaft."

As noted above, Kawano merely discloses that the follower roller means 16 of Kawano merely includes revolving shafts 16a that are arranged with their axes disposed at a slant on both sides of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed. Sako fails to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Kawano. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 11.

Regarding the rejection of independent claim 18, the combination of Kawano and Sako does not disclose or suggest a second drive shaft that is configured such that "the inclination places a centermost end of the second drive shaft segment one of more upstream and more downstream in the medium feed direction than the first drive shaft and the other end of such second drive shaft segment one of more downstream and more upstream than the first drive shaft."

Kawano merely discloses the centermost end of the revolving shaft 16a being more upstream in the feed direction than the driving shaft 15a, and the revolving shaft 16a being aligned with the driving shaft 15a. See Kawano, for example, Fig. 13b. Importantly, Kawano does not disclose a centermost end of the revolving shaft 16a being more downstream in the medium feed direction than the driving shaft 15a, and an end of the revolving shaft 16a being more downstream than the driving shaft 15a, as recited in claim 18.

Sako fails to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Kawano. Sako is only relied upon for disclosing a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of a driven roller being smaller than a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of a dry roller.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, the alleged combination of Kawano and Sako does not disclose or suggest a second drive shaft that has a configuration such that "the inclination places a centermost end of the second drive shafts segment one of more upstream and more downstream in the medium feed direction than the first drive shaft and the other end of the such second drive shaft segment one of more downstream and more

upstream than the first drive shaft, " as recited in claim 18. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 18.

Claims 3 and 6-10 depend from claim 1, claims 12-15 and 17 depend from claim 11, and claim 19 depends from claim 18. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of these claims for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

III. Conclusion

In view of at least the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: June 8, 2007

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